

The Ascension of our Lord

A Celebrate! Worship for Every Festival+
Processional Service of Holy Communion



Service Notes:

Celebrating the Ascension of our Lord with a procession dates to the beginning of its observance as a distinct festival within the Easter season. In its earliest observances, the Ascension was celebrated with a procession outside of the city to a nearby high point or hill, commemorating Jesus leading the disciples out of Jerusalem to Bethany. At various times throughout this liturgy, the children will process throughout the worship space in remembrance of the journey that Jesus and the early disciples made to the place where he ascended. At the conclusion of this liturgy, the entire congregation processes out into the neighborhood for prayer, blessing, and sending as a reminder that we are now the Body of Christ – the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus – bearing God’s creative and redeeming love to all the world.

Planning notes:

***Jingle bells**, tied with ribbons, need to be purchased in advance and distributed to all worshipers before the service begins.*

***Processional:** Because this liturgy requires an ongoing procession, there needs to be a Crucifer (or several) who can take turns in this role. There also needs to be a torch bearer to carry the paschal candle at designated times in the service, and an acolyte to extinguish the paschal candle at the conclusion of the Gospel reading.*

***Reader:** It is preferable to have the readers chosen in advance so that the reading can be practiced prior to worship. However, a reader may also be chosen at the start of the service, if this is part of local tradition and appropriate to a given context.*

***Thanksgiving for Baptism:** Because the Thanksgiving for Baptism is enhanced by pouring water in the font, a filled-pitcher should be placed near the font prior to the service. A child can be chosen either before the service or at the time of the Thanksgiving for Baptism, to pour the water.*

***Music:** The songs provided are suggestions. The hymn numbers are from Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Congregations are encouraged to choose sacred music that reflects the piety of their particular worshiping community. Should musical ensembles or soloists be available, congregations are encouraged to include either intergenerational ensembles or soloists and ensembles that represent a variety of ages.*

***Following the service,** all worshipers are invited to take their bells home as a remembrance of this joyous festival of the Ascension of our Lord.*

***Welcome:** It will be beneficial to the worshipping community to explain during the welcome that the service is child-attentive and arts-enriched, encouraging the active participation of worshipers of all ages. It will also be beneficial to explain that there will be considerable movement, and the children will be regularly invited to come forward to participate in a procession or “holy parade” during designated hymns. It will also be helpful to explain and invite the whole congregation to the procession into the neighborhood for prayers, blessing, and commissioning at the conclusion of the liturgy.*

Prelude/Gathering Music

Welcome

The lit paschal candle, cross, and worship leaders assemble at the entrance to the worship space. Invite children to bring their bells and join the procession. The congregation turns to face the cross for the processional reading.

GATHERING

Processional Reading: Acts 1:1-11

P: In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

C: After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

P: While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me;

C: for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'

P: So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?'

C: He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.

P: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

C: When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

P: While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.

C: They said, 'People of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

P: Jesus ascended! Our praises we sing! Jesus ascended! The bells now ring!

Entrance Hymn

A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!

ELW 393 (vs. 1-4)

All ring their bells during the entrance hymn.

Children follow the paschal candle, cross, and worship leaders in procession. It is preferable that the procession move throughout the entire worship space for the duration of the hymn. One possibility is to process up the center aisle, down a side aisle, back up the center aisle, down the opposite side aisle, and back up the center aisle. At the conclusion of the hymn, the processional party gathers around the font.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

P: In the name of God the Creator, Savior, and Spirit. Amen.

A child pours water into the font as the following is read.

P: Receive our prayers, gracious God, and form us anew into the Body of Christ, for the sake of the Gospel, for the sake of the world. In the name of +Jesus.

C: Amen

The Blessing

P: Receive now this blessing. God the Creator, +Christ the Savior, and the Spirit of new life, bless you now and forever. Amen.

Commission

P. Go in peace. Serve the Risen and Ascended Lord!

C. Thanks be to God.

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Acts 1:1-11; Luke 24: 44-53 Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version

Thanksgiving for Baptism, Prayer of the Day, and Prayers of the People by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox

The Affirmation of Faith, *A New Zealand prayer book*. (1989). Collins Liturgical Publ.

Offertory Prayer, Communion Invitation, and Post Communion Prayer by Rev. Sarah Krolak from liturgy for Young at Heart Worship + Elemental Worship

